



Prologue

The happy couple walked into the hospital and John went to register at the front desk while a nurse brought a wheelchair and started wheeling Kate to the delivery room. She then got a bad contraction and started bleeding. The nurse kept wheeling her to the delivery room but there was a trail of blood behind them. When they got in the delivery room, Kate asked where John was, but got no reply. The doctor told her to relax, but she sensed that was something wrong with her baby. That's when the nurse told her that the baby was stillborn but they had to deliver it anyway. Before she had time to think, the doctor started cutting into her stomach. Kate screamed that she wanted to be put to sleep but the doctor said that it was too late. She screamed and yelled as the doctor plunged the scalpel into her stomach. John walked in with a video camera and told Kate that she was doing great. A few seconds later, there was the sound of a baby crying and the nurse handed Kate her stillborn baby in a bloody blanket and she screamed.

Chapter 1

Kate sprang out of bed after the nightmare. She crept out of bed without waking John and went into the bathroom. She pulled her shirt up a bit and looked at the incision scar that went from her bellybutton to her abdomen. She took one of her pills in the medicine cabinet and went back to bed. The next morning she went to see her therapist, Dr.Browning. She told her that maybe she's having the nightmares because she and John are going to look at kids sometime during the week to adopt. Kate also told Dr.Browning that she passed by a liquor store on her way to there. Dr.Browning then asked if she went in and Kate told her that she was tempted too, but she didn't. Then, Dr.Browning told her that if she could resist going inside than she could handle being an adoptive mother.

As soon as Kate left Dr.Browning's office, she went to pick up Max from school. Kate got out of her car and a few minutes later, Max came running towards her. Max showed Kate the picture she drew of a butterfly and Kate told her (in sign language of course) that it was beautiful. They got in the car while they were stopped at a red light, Kate got so distracted that when a car blew their horn, Kate thought the light went green and a truck almost hit them.

When they got back home, Kate started playing the piano when something kept constantly banging against the house. Kate marched outside and saw Max trying to shoot a basket in the garage. She yelled for Max to stop and she told Kate that she was sorry but Kate apologized and told Max that she shouldn't have yelled at her. A few seconds later, John pulled up into the drive way with Danny. Danny ran out of the car, took the ball from Max, and threw the ball into the hoop. John took the ball from Danny and handed it to Max, lifting her up so she could reach the

basket. Kate tried saying hi to Danny, but he rushed past her to go play basketball with Max and John.

Later that night, Kate went into Max's room and tucked her into bed. Max took her hearing aid out and Kate asked if she wanted her to read her a bedtime story. Max nodded and grabbed a book, but Kate told her to choose a different one because she didn't want to read that book, but Max begged she read it to her. The story was about Max and how happy she was because she's getting a baby sister, but Baby Jessica died and went to Heaven. Max was happy that she went to Heaven, but wishes that she could have met her. After the story, Max asked Kate if Baby Jessica was an angel and Kate told her that she is a beautiful angel. After kissing Max goodnight, Kate went to their bedroom and into the bathroom to take her pills. She jumped when she saw John in the mirror and he said he was sorry for scaring her. He took her hand and brought Kate back to bed and she told him that even though she's not having second thoughts about adopting, she's excited and nervous. Kate hasn't felt this way since she thought they were bringing Baby Jessica home. John told Kate that they shouldn't adopt for his sake and she told him that they aren't and that she really wants to take the love she had for Jessica and give it to someone else.

Chapter 2

The next morning, Kate and John went to Saint Mariana's Orphanage for Girls. When they got out of the car, they were greeted by Sister Abigail and she thanked them for coming. Kate got a feeling that someone was watching them but when she looked up at the window, she saw nothing. When they got inside, her and John separated. Kate was shown the girls while John went to the bathroom. Kate and Sister Abigail watched the girls play and Sister Abigail told her that adopting an older child isn't easy but Kate told her that they're ready. She then asked where John was and Kate told her that he went to the bathroom. John left the bathroom and went looking for Kate, but stopped when he heard someone singing. John followed the voice and it led him to a little girl sitting in a room by herself, painting. He started to walk away when she greeted him. John stepped into the room and she told him that her name is Esther and he started looking at her painting. John asked Esther what she was working on, and she said that all of her paintings tell a story and in the one she's painting now, a mother lion is sad because she can't find her cubs. John then asked why she was smiling and Esther said it's because she's dreaming of her cubs. John told Esther that he hopes she finds them and Esther said that she will and then she started painting the baby cubs in.

Kate and Sister Abigail walked in and John introduced Kate to Esther. They continued to talk to Esther and then decided that they wanted to adopt her. Then Kate and John went downstairs and spoke to Sister Abigail in her office. Sister Abigail told them that Esther is a mature nine-year-old and that she's very smart and polite. She also told them that the only time Esther becomes

a problem is when you try to take off the ribbons around her neck and wrists. Then she told Kate and John that she'll file the paperwork as soon as possible.

Chapter 3

When Kate, John, and Esther got to the house, Max came running out. Esther used sign language to greet her and Max instantly took a liking to her. Danny came out and loudly asked John why Esther was dressed the way she was and he told Danny to be quiet. They walked into the house and Esther got excited when she saw Kate's piano. When Kate offered to play with her, Esther accepted. John, Kate, and Max showed Esther her new room and she said that it was perfect and she loved it. Kate and John also introduced Esther to Barbara, John's mother.

A few days later, they had a party in honor of Esther that included presents for Esther and cake. It was kind of like a birthday party. Danny didn't want to join them so he just played Guitar Hero with his friend, Tyler. Danny yelled to John, "Dad, dad! Look! I'm winning!" John told him that it was cool and watched as Esther opened the present that he gave her. It was a huge easel that came with painting supplies. Esther gave him a big hug and told John that she loved it. Danny told Tyler that the game was getting boring and left, obviously upset that John wasn't paying attention to him.

Kate was in the kitchen putting the rest of the cake away when Barbara came in. Barbara asked her what she is going to do and Kate told her that she's going to get Esther settled first and then go back to teaching. Barbara then reminded Kate that she can't go back to Yale and Kate told her that she's planning to give piano lessons from the house. Barbara sighed and left the kitchen after telling her that she didn't think it was a good idea. Kate then looked out of the window over the sink and panicked. She

saw Esther pulling Max on a sled over the icy pond. Kate ran outside and yelled to them, "Get off of the ice!!!, It's dangerous! You know that!"

The next morning, Kate called all of the kids downstairs for school. Max and Danny came down without Esther. Kate yelled for Esther again and she came down wearing an old-fashioned dress that made Max and Danny laugh. Kate told them to go in the car and wait while she talked to Esther. Kate told her that she should probably change and Esther said, "You're just worried that the other kids will make fun of me. I thought you said it's good to be different." Kate sighed and said, "OK, let's go."

They got to school and Esther walked into her new classroom. The teacher introduced her to the class and told her to sit at any empty seat. As she walked to an empty seat in the back of the room, a girl named Brenda said, "Little Bo Peep just texted me. She wants her outfit back." Everyone laughed but Esther said nothing, she just glared at Brenda and walked to her seat.

Later that night, Kate ran a bath for Esther and went to do the laundry when she heard the door lock so Kate went to check on Esther. Kate knocked on the door and when Esther opened it, Kate told her that they don't lock doors in their house. Esther replied that she's afraid someone will walk in on her. Kate told her that no one will walk in on her and that she won't go downstairs until Esther's done. Esther then told Kate that she'll sing for her because she used to sing for the nuns at the Orphanage so they'll know she's OK while taking a shower. Kate agreed and continued to do the laundry. Kate went into Esther's room to put her clothes away and while she was listening to Esther sing, she noticed that one of her drawers was stuck. After tugging and pulling at it, the drawer opened and Kate saw and

old bible with a picture of a man sticking out of it. Kate accidentally dropped it and at that moment, Esther stopped singing but started back up again. Kate shoved the bible back into its hiding spot and left the room.

Chapter 4

Later that night, Danny is shooting paint balls in the woods. Then, a bird landed on the target and Danny shot it on purpose. He got upset when he saw that the bird wasn't moving and ran to check on it. The bird wasn't dead but it's barely alive and looks like it's in pain. Suddenly, Esther and Max show up out of nowhere and Esther asks what happened. Danny started crying and said that he didn't think that the paintball would hurt the bird. Esther then picked up a brick and told Danny to put it out of its misery but he refused, so Esther took it and slammed it down on the bird, killing it. Esther took Max's hand and they walked away from the scene, leaving Danny with the dead bird and the bloody brick. The next day at school, Danny's friend, Tyler, told him that his sister is a 'total spaz' but Danny says Esther's not his sister and knocks her books out of her hands when she's passing by. As Esther was kneeling to pick up the books, Brenda came by and picked one up for her. When Brenda saw that it was a Bible, she held it up and called Esther a Jesus-freak. Esther tried snatching the book from her but it fell to the ground and the pages scattered all over the floor. She panicked and rushed to pick them up while a crowd formed around her, laughing. Brenda then tried to pull off the ribbon around her neck but Esther startles her by kicking and screaming as though she was possessed. Later that day, Kate was giving Esther piano lessons when Esther started putting herself down about making eleven mistakes. Kate wanted to talk about what happened at school but Esther told her that there's nothing to talk about and got up and left.

The next day, John was at the park with Esther and Max and was pushing Max on the swings. Then Joyce Patterson, their next door neighbor, came wearing a very racy outfit and started talking to John. Esther was listening to their conversation but got distracted when she saw Brenda walking on the playground. After Joyce left, John looked kind of nervous and went for a smoke while Esther and Max went on the playground. Brenda went to the big, wooden house with the slide at the end. She had this feeling that someone was following her but ignored and walked slowly down the hallway of the house. She jumped when a group of boys came running out of the room she was passing by but continued walking. She reached the slide and looked down, when Esther came running from behind her and pushed her off the slide. Brenda fell and landed on the ground at a very awkward angle. Esther turned and walked away, shoving past Max, who saw everything, in the process.

During dinner, John and Kate asked Esther what happened and she told them that her and Brenda were playing and she fell. Kate then asked Max if she saw what happened and Max said that Brenda slipped and fell down the slide. Max then said something to Danny but he didn't understand so he asked Kate but Esther told him that she said to pass the bread and butter. Danny says he wasn't asking her and she just shrugged and started cutting her steak when Danny asks her if she could eat normally and Esther replied that she was eating normal. Danny then asked if that's how they eat in Transylvania and she replied that she's from Russia and Transylvania's in Romania. Danny instigates the situation more by saying she was taught at a school for retards and John ordered him to apologize to his sister. Danny reached his breaking point and yelled, "She's not my sister!" and ran away from the table. As his punishment, John locks the door to Danny's tree house and says he'll unlock it when he apologizes to

Esther. A few days later, Sister Abigail came for a visit after being told about Brenda's accident.

While Kate and John were talking about Brenda's accident with Sister Abigail, Esther started panicking. She went to Max's room and said, "A mean lady is coming to take me away. Will you help me?" Max agreed and they snuck into John's office, looking for the keys to the tree house. Max found some keys and handed them to Esther. She used the keys to unlock John's safe, and found a gun. Esther opened the gun and took some of the bullets out, only leaving one in. She pointed the gun at Max's head and asked her, "Do you want to play?" Max looked terrified and shook her head no. Esther lowered the gun and put it back in the safe and while Max wasn't looking, Esther took the hammer that was next to her and shoved it in her bag. Esther and Max ran to a nearby bridge not far from the house that she knew Sister Abigail would pass. Esther told Max to stand in front of Sister Abigail's car and wave her hands to get her to stop but she looked nervous. When they saw Sister Abigail's car in the distance, Max froze with fear and refused to move. She finally had enough and when Sister Abigail got near the bridge, Esther shoved Max into the ice covered road, where she fell to the ground. When Sister Abigail saw her, she gasped, slamming her foot onto the brakes and jumped out of her car, rushing to Max's side. While trying to calm Max down, she didn't notice Esther creeping up behind her until it was too late. She lifted the rusty old hammer over her head and brought it down, slamming it onto Sister Abigail's skull, knocking her unconscious. There was blood everywhere. Esther pulled Max to her feet and ordered her to stop crying. She told Max to help her lift Sister Abigail before another car comes and sees. They pushed her body down a hill but Sister Abigail gained consciousness and tried climbing back up. Esther picked up the rusty hammer and hit Sister Abigail over and over until she was

very bloody and definitely dead. She then took Max up to the tree house and took off her bloody dress and gloves, but Max continued to cry. Esther told Max that if they get in trouble for killing Sister Abigail, she'll go to jail with her just for helping. Then she told Max that she won't tell on her if Max doesn't tell on Esther. Max agreed and Esther comforted her. While they were climbing down the tree house, Esther saw Danny watching them but didn't do anything.

While Danny was sleeping, Esther woke him buy holding a box cutter to his throat and asked him what he saw. Danny told Esther that he only saw her and Max coming down from the tree house. Esther told him that if he ever told anyone, she'll castrate him. Danny was so scared, he peed himself. Esther let him go and left the room.

Chapter 5

The next day, Kate brought the kids to school. When Esther got out of the car, Kate asked Max and Danny if Esther did anything that hurt them. Scared that Esther would find out, they both said no and Danny hopped out of the car. When Danny was walking up the stairs of the school, his bag spilled everything that was in it but he didn't notice. Kate left Max in the car by herself and went to help Danny. Kate was confused because the bag was new. While Kate was helping Danny, Esther released the brake on the car and put it in neutral. The car rolled down the street and Danny told Kate because Max was still in the car, Kate ran after the car and a bystander tried to stop it, but he fell off. Finally, the car stopped when it hit a big pile of snow. Kate rushed towards the car and comforted Max, who luckily wasn't hurt.

Later that night, Kate and John were arguing about what happened at the school. Kate swore to John that she set the parking brake. She then told him that she thought there was something wrong with Esther. After arguing some more, John finally gave in and they took Esther to Dr. Browning. But, Kate's plan backfired. She was frustrated when Dr. Browning said that Kate's the one at fault and not Esther. She got more frustrated when John refused to back her up. He just stayed quiet during the whole session.

The next morning, John went to wake Esther up to go to the dentist and when he walked into her room, she scared him by leaping from under the covers. Esther told John that she didn't want to go to the dentist and he said that she doesn't have to go, as long as they rescheduled and Esther went to John's office to draw with him (John's an architect). When they were in John's

office, Esther said that she's waited a long time for a father like him. When John asked if she's waited for a mother like Kate, Esther explained to him that she doesn't feel like Kate loves her. John told her that it wasn't true and that Kate's just having a hard time getting close to her. John then suggested that Esther should do something nice for Kate and Esther agreed. Later that day while Kate was in the kitchen, Esther walked in and told her that she had a surprise for her. Esther held out a bunch of roses that Kate instantly recognized. They were the roses that Kate planted in Baby Jessica's garden. Kate snapped and grabbed Esther's arm while Esther screamed. John came running in and Esther ran out crying while John comforted Kate who was weeping as she crumpled onto the floor, staring at the roses.

While Kate was in the greenhouse still upset about what happened, Esther snuck into the tool shed and grabbed a screwdriver. Esther wrapped it in a rag and put it in her mouth. She put her arm inside of a vice and tightened it until she heard a crack and felt a great amount of pain shooting up into her arm. Esther went to bed and cried for John. When he went into her room, Esther told him that her arm still hurt where Kate grabbed her and showed John her arm. John was shocked because her arm looked bruised and the bone was sticking out so he took her to the hospital.

Chapter 6

Kate went into her and John's room and saw Esther lying on the bed being comforted by John. John told Kate that she broke Esther's arm and Kate told him that she didn't grab her that hard. John just said that it would be best if Kate slept downstairs. Kate left and drove to the liquor store and brought 2 bottles of wine. When she got back home, she thought about drinking the wine, but decided not too after remembering that drinking almost cost Max her life. Kate poured the wine down the sink and went to sleep on the couch.

A few days later, Dr. Browning came to the house and Kate said that she didn't hurt Esther. At that moment, John put 2 wine glasses on the table. He said that the girls found them and then Kate asked if when he said girls did he mean Esther and John told Kate that it didn't matter. He then asked if she started drinking again and Kate could tell that Dr. Browning was thinking the same thing. Kate defended herself by saying that she thought about drinking the wine but poured it down the sink. John then asked why she had the other bottle and they started arguing. That's when John dropped a bombshell on Kate: if she didn't go to rehab, he'll divorce her and take the kids.

The next day, Danny snuck into Max's room and asked her if she knew anything about Esther and she confessed by showing him her drawings of Brenda's accident, Sister Abigail's accident, and the car accident. Max also told Danny that the hammer and Esther's bloody clothes were in the tree house and he told her that once her gets the hammer, their parents will believe them and Esther will be locked away.

The next day, Danny snuck into the tree house and looked for the hammer and the bloody clothes, but couldn't find them. Esther suddenly appeared and threw the hammer and her clothes on the ground. She said that Max will be arrested for helping her, but Danny told her that Max was forced to. Esther poured gasoline over the evidence and lit a match, setting it on fire and the tree house on fire. Esther left and locked the tree house with Danny still inside and simply watched while Danny screamed for his mom. Danny crawled out the window but it was too late and the tree house fell and Danny was knocked unconscious.

As Esther lifted a rock to finish him off, Max popped out of nowhere and pushed Esther before she could do anything and a few seconds later, Kate came running over. While at the hospital waiting for word on Danny, a doctor came in and said that Danny was alive and in stable condition. Kate asked if he'll remember anything but the doctor said they'll have to wait awhile before they know. Kate and John walked away for awhile and Kate told him that either Esther or Danny started the fire. John said he doesn't know which one did it and Kate was frustrated with his response. Kate then gave in and said that she'll go to rehab only if Esther left the house at the same time.

Chapter 7

Esther asked Barbara for a dollar for the soda machine but she told Esther that Kate said not to let her leave the waiting room. Esther frowned and Barbara gave her the dollar anyway. Esther took it and walked out of the waiting room with no intention of getting a drink just yet. She walked down the long white hallway and into Danny's hospital room. Esther slowly walked towards his bed and yanked the curtains closed. She took the heart monitor that was on his finger and put it on hers so no one would know that there was a problem and took off his oxygen mask. Then, she took his pillow from under his head and pressed it against his face. She continued suffocating him with his pillow while he was fighting for his life. When his body went limp, she took the pillow from his face and tossed it aside. Esther put the oxygen mask on his face and placed the heart monitor back onto his cold finger. Esther walked out of the room casually and into the hallway, listening to the alarms blaring throughout the hallway. Esther then got a soda from the soda machine and walked back to the waiting room. Minutes later, Danny's doctor told us that Danny was dead. Mission accomplished. Kate crumpled to the floor, crying, and John comforted her. After a while, she got up and slapped Esther across the face, causing her to fall and drop her soda. Esther started crying and John comforted her while doctors sedated Kate and brought her into an empty hospital room. John went into Kate's hospital room and told her that he's taking Max and Esther back home. Kate told John to not let Esther anyway near Max. He said nothing and left.

They got home and while John was tucking Max into bed, Esther walked into the room. When Max saw Esther, she looked scared.

Esther wished her sweet dreams and bend over to kiss her forehead, taking her hearing aid off of the dresser. John finished tucking Max into bed and Esther walked out. John came out minutes after Max fell asleep and went downstairs. Esther went into John and Kate's room and took one of her long black dresses from the hanger. She brought it into her room and modified it. After a while, Esther went downstairs wearing tons of makeup and Kate's modified dress and took a seat next to John, but instead of getting angry, he sobs and tells Esther that he's upset about what happened to Danny. Esther assured him that he's a wonderful father and husband and then told him that she loves him. When Esther started coming on to him, John came back to reality and yelled at her to go to her room. Esther ran up the stairs and into her room, crying hysterically while the makeup dripped down her face like black rain drops.

While Kate was in the hospital, she got a call from Doctor Varava from the Saarne Institute in Estonia. When she answered, he told her that he got the picture of Esther that she sent him and asked where she is (The Saarne Institute isn't an orphanage, it's a mental institute). Kate told Dr.Varava that Esther's at the house with her husband, John, and he warned her to call the police and get her family out of the house, but Kate told him that John won't believe her. Dr.Varava then told Kate to tell John that Esther isn't nine-years-old. She's a grown woman, named Leena Klammer, and is actually 33 years old and she was one of their most violent patients, who disappeared about a year ago. Kate was in disbelief and Doctor Varava said that the scars on her neck and wrists are from her straitjacket. It was at that moment that I realized why Esther wore the ribbons around her neck and wrists: to cover the scars.

Chapter 8

Esther now looked horrible. She wiped off all her makeup, removed her fake teeth, and the ribbons from her neck and wrists. John went looking for Esther in her room but he doesn't see her, but he does discover something. He turned on a special light and saw what Esther really painted, images of violence and other things. John is mortified but continues his search when the lights go out. John walked to the basement and went to the control panel and turned the lights back on. He started climbing back up the stairs when Esther came running down the stairs with a knife. She stabbed him in the stomach and John fell to the ground, still alive. Esther then continues to stab him repeatedly in the chest. Then looking at the top of the stairs, she saw that Max saw the whole thing. Max ran off and hid, while Esther grabs John's gun from the safe and looks for Max.

After sneaking past her doctors, Kate escapes from the hospital and races to the house while trying to call the police and John. The road is slippery though and when Kate gets near the house, she crashes through it which alerts Esther who is upstairs looking for Max. Kate finds John dead in the basement and breaks down, but then her concern goes to Max. As Kate comes up the basement stairs, Esther finds her and shoots her in the shoulder, but even though Kate's in pain, she brushes it off and continues to look for Max. Max is in the greenhouse hiding behind the plants and she is relieved when she sees Kate on the roof of the greenhouse, but she tells her to be quiet because Esther is there. Just as Esther is about to find Max, Kate screams and Esther shoots at her. The roof is made of glass, so the bullet shatters it and Kate comes crashing down onto Esther. Max waits until Kate

regains conscious and grabs Max and runs. Kate takes Max down to the pond as comforts her, when she sees police cars pull up to the house to arrest Esther. When the police enter the house, they search the whole house but when they get to the greenhouse, Esther is gone. Kate and Max are still at the pond when Esther lunges at Kate with a knife. Kate and Esther wrestle down a hill and right into the pond, with Max watching on. The gun flies out of Esther's hand when she's wrestling Kate, landing a few feet away from Max. Esther cuts Kate's other shoulder with the knife, but Kate kicks her off before she can stab her. Max grabs the gun and holds it up. Being very young and not knowing how to fire; Max aims and shoots the ice and not Esther. The ice cracks and Kate and Esther fall in. They fight under water before Kate kicks Esther and resurfaces. As Kate is climbing out, Esther pops up and grabs onto Kate's legs, the knife hidden behind her back. Esther says, "Please don't let me die, Mommy." Kate finally loses it and yells "I'm not your Mommy!!" and kicks Esther in the neck, hard. Esther sinks back down and Kate runs off with Max. A while after they left, Esther floats back up and smirks.

